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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00	DS-00
	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10
	SCT-03	SNP-01	SP-01	SSC-01	SSO-00	SS-01	TRSE-00
	T-01	USIE-00	/055W				

-----138727 261957Z /38

O 261955Z FEB 92 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8681
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 02163

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PBST, CO, VE
SUBJECT: [REDACTED] ON THE COUP ATTEMPT
AND POLITICS

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. [REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT
ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT IS A REAL POSSIBILITY SINCE THE
POLITICAL CLASS IS "EXHAUSTED, INCOMPETENT, UNIMAGINATIVE
AND CORRUPT." [REDACTED] THAT ONLY A WHOLESALE CHANGE
IN NATIONAL VALUES, WHICH HE DOES NOT FORESEE, WOULD SAVE
THE PRESENT SYSTEM. THE BENEFICIARY OF PUBLIC

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DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE PARTIES WILL BE LABOR-BASED,
LEFT-LEANING "CAUSA R." [REDACTED] THAT COPEI WOULD NOT
ALLOW ITS MEMBERS TO JOIN THE CABINET UNLESS CAP PROVIDES
CERTAIN GUARANTEES. THE EXCEPTION WOULD BE A PERIOD OF
GENUINE "NATIONAL EMERGENCY" REQUIRING A REAL GOVERNMENT
OF NATIONAL UNITY. [REDACTED] THAT COPEI WILL
EVENTUALLY SUPPORT CONVOCAION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
FOR REFORM OF THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH COULD MEET
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS YEAR'S LOCAL ELECTIONS IN
DECEMBER. [REDACTED] THAT FEAR OF A "SELL-OUT" TO
COLOMBIA IN THE GULF OF VENEZUELA AND POPULAR REACTION TO

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 25 FEB 2017
DATE/CASE ID: 28 JUL 2008 200503656

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PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 1911 WERE TWO OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF THE COUP ATTEMPT. END SUMMARY.

MEETING WITH [REDACTED]

3. POLOFF MET ON FEBRUARY 25 WITH [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] TO DISCUSS THE COUP ATTEMPT
AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. [REDACTED]

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A FEELING OF FOREBODING

5. [REDACTED] THAT THE PRESENT POLITICAL SYSTEM IS DOOMED. ITS TERMINAL ARTERIOSCELOSIS MAKES ANOTHER MILITARY COUP ATTEMPT OR POPULAR UPRISING LIKELY. THE POLITICAL CLASS IS "EXHAUSTED, INCOMPETENT, UNIMAGINATIVE AND CORRUPT," HE CHARGES, AND WILL BE UNABLE TO RESPOND TO CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES. ONLY A WHOLESAL CHANGE IN NATIONAL VALUES, WHICH HE DOES NOT FORESEE, WOULD SAVE THE PRESENT SYSTEM, IN HIS OPINION. THE ONLY BENEFICIARY OF RECENT EVENTS AMONG THE POLITICAL PARTIES, HE BELIEVES,

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WILL BE HITHERTO TINY "CAUSA R," A LABOR-BASED, LEFT-LEANING PARTY. THE REASON FOR ITS ABILITY TO BENEFIT FROM PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, [REDACTED] IS THAT IT IS THE ONLY PARTY WITH AN "ANTI-SYSTEM" IMAGE. DISLIKE OF THE SYSTEM IS SO STRONG, HE ADDED, THAT "CAUSA R" SHOULD DO MUCH, MUCH BETTER IN COMING ELECTIONS. "IF THEY OCCUR," HE NOTED AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT.

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THE PRICE OF JUSTICE

6. [REDACTED] SAID THAT HE HAS COME TO KNOW MOST OF THE JUDGES IN CARACAS. MORE THAN HALF, HE CLAIMED, ARE CORRUPT, SOME FOR POLITICAL, SOME FOR ECONOMIC, REASONS. ANYONE WITH MONEY OR POWER, THEREFORE, AVOIDS PROSECUTION. REFERRING TO A VISIT TO THE [REDACTED] PENITENTIARY WHICH HE RECENTLY MADE, [REDACTED] SAID THAT ALL OF THE 3,500 INMATES, WHO LIVE IN INHUMAN CONDITIONS, ARE FROM THE LOWER CLASS. CITING THIS EXAMPLE [REDACTED] ASKED RHETORICALLY HOW ANYONE COULD HELP BUT RESENT THE ELITE

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ACTION ARA-01

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T-01 USIE-00 /055W

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8682
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 02163

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PEST, CO, VE

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] ON THE COUP ATTEMPT WHEN THE PRICE OF JUSTICE I.
EXAMPLE, THAT MORNING'S NEWS THAT THE JUDGE RESPONSIBLE
FOR HANDLING THE CRIMINAL CASE AGAINST FORMER PRESIDENT
LUSINCHI HAD ONCE AGAIN POSTPONED ACTION [REDACTED] EXPRESSED
AMAZEMENT AT THE SYSTEM'S BRAZEN DEFENSE OF CORRUPTION
GIVEN THE FEBRUARY 4 COUP ATTEMPT.

COPEI'S ATTITUDE

7.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] SAID THAT COPEI WOULD NOT JOIN THE
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GOVERNMENT AS A PARTY BUT MIGHT AUTHORIZE INDIVIDUALS SUCH
AS HUMBERTO CALDERON BERTI AND PEDRO PABLO AGUILAR TO
BECOME MINISTERS IF CAP PROVIDED THE RIGHT GUARANTEES IN
AREAS LIKE PUBLIC SPENDING, ETC. (CAP MAY HAVE FAILED TO
PROVIDE SUCH GUARANTEES, SINCE THE NEW MINISTERS SWORN IN
LATER ON FEBRUARY 25 (SEPTOL) DID NOT INCLUDE COPEYANOS.)
THE EXCEPTION, [REDACTED] WOULD BE A PERIOD OF GENUINE
"NATIONAL EMERGENCY" REQUIRING A REAL GOVERNMENT OF
NATIONAL UNITY. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] HAD ALSO DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF THE
RESIGNATION OF SUPREME COURT JUDGES EN MASSE, EXPRESSED
HIS PERSONAL OPPOSITION TO SUCH A MOVE. "THEY ARE NOT ALL
GUILTY," HE EMPHASIZED, ADDING THAT IT MIGHT BE
APPROPRIATE TO CALL FOR THE RESIGNATION OF THE REMAINDER
OF THE JUSTICES IF THE COPEI REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COURT
FIRST RESIGNED IN PROTEST AGAINST THE CORRUPTION OF THE
JUDICIAL SYSTEM. (COMMENT: ONE COPEI JUSTICE RESIGNED
FROM THE SUPREME COURT ON FEB. 25.) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] HAD DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF
CONVOKING A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY FOR REFORM OF THE

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CONSTITUTION. [REDACTED] COPEI WAS LIKELY TO COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE CONVOCAION OF ONE AFTER THE DECEMBER ELECTIONS, WHICH, HE IMPLIED, COULD ALSO SERVE TO ELECT REPRESENTATIVES TO SUCH AN ASSEMBLY. COPEI WOULD PROBABLY SUPPORT ITS CONVOCAION, [REDACTED] DESPITE THE PROBABILITY THAT HITHERTO "FRINGE" GROUPS LIKE "CAUSA R" WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REPRESENTED IN IT. DAGER ALSO SAID THAT COPEI WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN SUPPORTING LEGISLATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "SOCIAL MEGA-PROJECT" IN CONGRESS IF AD CONTINUED TO INSIST THAT ITS LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISBURSEMENT OF THE FUNDS

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IN QUESTION.

COLOMBIA

8. [REDACTED] IN HIS OPINION, FEAR OF A "SELL-OUT" TO COLOMBIA ON THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY IN THE GULF OF VENEZUELA AND POPULAR REACTION TO PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 1911 WERE TWO OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF THE FEBRUARY 4 COUP ATTEMPT. IN REGARD TO THE FIRST, [REDACTED] THE LOSS OF MORE THAN 40 PERCENT OF VENEZUELA'S TERRITORY TO COLOMBIA IN THE WEST AND TO GREAT BRITAIN IN THE EAST AFTER INDEPENDENCE HAD MADE PUBLIC OPINION HERE "SUPER SENSITIVE" TO GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES VIS-A-VIS THE COUNTRY'S WESTERN NEIGHBOR. THE PERCEPTION THAT GOVERNMENTAL INEPTITUDE WAS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR VENEZUELA'S FAILURE TO RETAIN ITS TERRITORY IN PAST NEGOTIATIONS WITH COLOMBIA MADE THE PUBLIC HERE EVEN MORE SENSITIVE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION. IN REGARD TO THE SECOND, [REDACTED] THE PRESENCE OF MORE THAN 2 MILLION "UNDOCUMENTED" OR ILLEGAL COLOMBIANS AND THOUSANDS MORE POOR ECUADOREANS, DOMINICANS AND IMMIGRANTS FROM OTHER CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES MADE VENEZUELAN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO THE QUESTION OF WHO WOULD DERIVE BENEFITS FROM THE COUNTRY'S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM. PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 1911, WHICH [REDACTED] ACTUALLY PROVIDED MORE BENEFITS FOR THE CHILDREN OF ILLEGAL RESIDENTS THAN FOR THE CHILDREN OF VENEZUELAN THEMSELVES, CONSTITUTED "TREASON," PROVOKING "UNBELIEVABLE" IRE HERE AND MAKING CAP'S SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS ON COLOMBIA'S SUPPOSED "RIGHTS" TO PART OF THE GULF OF VENEZUELA EVEN MORE "OFFENSIVE" THAN THEY WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN.

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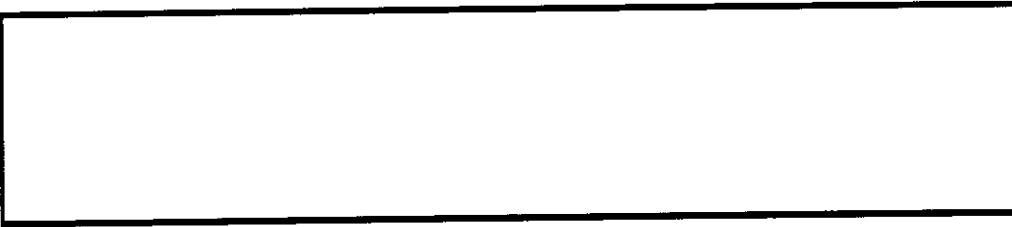
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COMMENT



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